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## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
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### THE COORDINATION OF RESEARCH AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES IN MARKETING\*

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First, what is research and what is extension? Several types of research studies suggest themselves and the problem of how these can be more closely coordinated with extension activities.

In the following discussion, I shall use the terms research and extension in a broad sense. Many students feel that true research work involves diligent investigation and the drawing of conclusions from the findings. I shall include under the term "research," all activities involved in fact finding without regard to the drawing of conclusions. Activities involved in fact giving, will be included under the term "extension."

Most of the research being conducted by the State experiment stations can be grouped into three classes. First, research studies of a general character, such as a study of the marketing of livestock in your State. Such a study would involve, among other things, trends in livestock production, the evolution of marketing methods, seasonal movements to market, market destinations and the like.

Such studies are extremely valuable to both research and extension workers in familiarizing them with existing conditions and in pointing out special problems in the field. These studies should uncover weak spots in the existing order of things and suggest possible ways of strengthening them. The practical application of the results of such research studies must rest upon the extension forces.

The second type of research, which I want to mention, is that which deals with a specific problem in greater detail than the general type of study can do. A study of the comparative costs of marketing livestock by truck and by rail; a business analysis of a cooperative marketing association, or a study of the factors influencing the prices of burley tobacco will serve to illustrate this type of specific research. Such projects easily may be the outgrowth of general research studies but not necessarily

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so. They may be self-evident problems demanding attention or merely ones which stimulate the curiosity of the research worker.

Yet again, and I believe more ideally, specific research studies should be the outgrowth of a keenly felt need, on the part of extension workers for more information on a particular problem. No two extension problems are identical. Some require far more specific study than others. In preparation for some, the extension specialist needs little more than a travel authorization and a railroad ticket, while for others several months of diligent study might leave him with the feeling of being unprepared. It is the latter class which furnish material for specific research studies.

Research projects frequently are planned with little thought of the possible extension application of their results. Such will not be the case when projects are undertaken at the request and suggestion of extension workers.

One of the problems involved in conducting specific research at the request of extension workers, arises from the fact that few such projects result in experiment station bulletins, bearing the name of the investigator. There is a natural hesitance on the part of research workers, to devote their time and best efforts to working out materials which they know will end up "in the files" and, as a unit, never get beyond the four walls of the office. Until "unpublished data" and mimeographed circulars are generally held in higher regard, this attitude seems likely to continue. Perhaps a more liberal use of Experiment Station circulars for the publication of such material would furnish a happy solution of the difficulty.

It would seem that the two types of research already mentioned might easily be coordinated with the extension program but perhaps a few suggestions will not be amiss. When general research studies point out problems which appear to be of vital concern to the farmers of the State, extension specialists should be urged to formulate their programs in accordance with such research findings. If funds do not permit additional help, perhaps the research man can devote some time to extension activities until the extension specialist is able to expand his program. The project should not be allowed to die or even become dormant between the research stage and the extension stage of its life cycle.

Research work is open to criticism in that many times a project is "completed" and then allowed to slumber or die while the investigator hurries on to some new project which may be entirely unrelated to the first. I believe that in nearly all cases, research projects should be kept alive, either as such or as extension projects or both.

I scarcely need mention the fact that the successful extension worker usually differs distinctly in type from the successful research worker. The agricultural industry needs both types of people. The extension worker wants predigested information and is a glutton for it. The research worker craves raw facts and hesitates to accept the finished product without examining the raw materials from which it was made.

Is it not reasonable then to suppose that the extension man, as a result of their field contacts, are in an excellent position to assist research students in making their efforts most fruitful? A specific problem which presents itself to an extension specialist in the field may furnish the research man with the key to a study, the results of which are of inestimable value but which would have been missed entirely without the special stimulus of the field contact.

The principal means of coordination then, is through the frequent interchange of ideas. The extension specialist being on the lookout for things which will aid his colleague, the research worker, and vice versa. Such close cooperation precludes joint office space. Formal conferences will not suffice because it is the informal, argumentative discussion which results in coordinated action.

The close coordination of research and extension activities is not a mere whimsical dream but actually is being accomplished in some institutions. Recently in a letter to me, Professor L. G. Foster of Ohio State University said, "More often than not the extension men assist at one time or another in outlining - in some cases tabulating - research material, that is, going through the ordinary processes of research. This material, as it becomes available, is made up into such form that it may be used immediately in our extension program. The failure of many research projects, in my opinion, is due to the fact that the material at the time of publication is often-times of little value to the extension worker."

And that is another point which I want to bring out in connection with this phase of my discussion. That of making research findings available for use and distribution. In a number of cases the results of investigations have been prepared in the form of a research bulletin which has been followed or accompanied by a popular bulletin based on the same study. This plan, I believe, is highly commendable. Extension specialists frequently experience difficulty in making extension applications of research studies. This plan should be of assistance to them. I believe, however, in most cases in the past the author of the research bulletin also has been author of the popular bulletin. Some men no doubt possess the ability to do good research work and to write popular bulletins but the combination is by no means general. I am of the opinion that in most cases the popular bulletin would be improved if an extension specialist, who is interested in the project, were to act as joint author with the research worker.

Although research publications are less subject to the criticism of being out of date when issued than formerly, that criticism still is somewhat in order. A few research workers still feel afraid that someone will steal their dope if they do not guard it carefully. Usually, however, in the field of agricultural economics there is so much to be done that no one need fear. Nevertheless this feeling may discourage the use of progress reports. When an extension specialist is vitally interested and actively familiar with research studies, it is probable that from time to time he will see conclusions of which he could make immediate use. If so, progress

reports incorporating the data and some conclusions might be very helpful. The tardiness of the final report might well be alleviated in this way. Many articles which appear in "Farm Economics" which is published monthly at Cornell University will illustrate my point.

The third type of research which I want to mention is more nearly one of policy than of method. I believe it is as much the task of research to foretell the needs of the future as to solve the problems of the present. Research should be the foreseeing eye of extension activities. It should perceive extension problems before they arise and, in so far as possible, build up a foundation of information upon which future extension activities may be based.

Three times in the last eight years a movement has started among the dairymen near one of our Kentucky cities, which manifests their interest in improving marketing methods. A research study of milk marketing in that city should furnish valuable information to producers when the movement reaches such proportions that a cooperative marketing association is started.

Our study of the marketing of Kentucky bluegrass seed and orchard grass seed has furnished information to producers who from time to time have contemplated cooperative marketing enterprises.

It should not be difficult, with extension and research forces cooperating, to foresee most of our important extension problems sufficiently far in advance to permit the accumulation of information regarding them. This I submit to you as a means of strengthening our research work and on increasing the effectiveness of our extension activities.

Another problem involved in coordinating our activities is that of interstate marketing movements. Activities with reference to the dairy market, the livestock market or the poultry market in Cincinnati, certainly is of interest jointly to Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. Research and extension activities in regard to that market should be conducted simultaneously in the three States or at least the three States should coordinate their plans and cooperate in their activities. The future doubtless will witness much cooperative action between States, on problems of joint concern in both the field of research and that of extension.

I purposely have avoided discussing extension activities in their direct relationship to cooperative marketing associations until the last. I can see little reason why extension activities with marketing associations need differ materially from those with other groups or individuals. Should the results of a milk marketing study be made available to a group of interested farmers any more readily than to a milk distributor operating in the territory? Whether your answer to this question is Yes or No, the fact remains that some of us have confined our marketing extension activities almost exclusively to cooperative associations. It is our duty to improve marketing methods and whether such improvement comes in the form of cooperative marketing or otherwise depends upon the conditions of the case in

question. Through the teaching of fundamental principles and the results of research, our clientele should become so informed that the best solution of their immediate marketing problems safely may be left to them. This, I believe, is the ideal toward which we should strive in marketing extension work.

